

2026 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 148

BY SENATOR BARROW

UTILITIES. Creates the Utility Assistance Coordination Task Force to study and make recommendations regarding coordination of utility assistance programs in the state.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To create the Utility Assistance Coordination Task Force to study and make
3 recommendations regarding coordination of utility assistance programs in the state.

4 WHEREAS, many Louisiana households, including older adults, persons with
5 disabilities, families with young children, and households with low or fixed incomes,
6 experience difficulty paying utility bills, particularly during extreme weather, major storms,
7 economic hardship, or other emergencies; and

8 WHEREAS, Louisiana residents may seek help through a variety of assistance
9 programs, including but not limited to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
10 (LIHEAP), crisis assistance, weatherization assistance, utility sponsored assistance
11 programs, nonprofit and faith-based assistance, local government programs, and referral
12 services; and

13 WHEREAS, Louisiana had approximately sixty-two million three hundred seventy
14 thousand five hundred dollars in funding available through LIHEAP in fiscal year 2024 and
15 served a total of ninety-three thousand six hundred forty-five households; and

16 WHEREAS, in Louisiana, over five hundred thousand households were
17 income-eligible for LIHEAP in fiscal year 2024, meaning that approximately one in six
18 eligible households received assistance; and

1 WHEREAS, multiple energy bill assistance programs may operate simultaneously,
2 including LIHEAP, utility-sponsored assistance, nonprofit fuel funds, crisis assistance,
3 arrearage management, and related customer support programs, and coordination among by
4 program administrators may improve access, reduce duplication, and better reduce
5 household energy burdens; and

6 WHEREAS, public and private partners working hand in hand could help Louisiana
7 households more easily identify available assistance, reduce barriers to access, improve the
8 timeliness and effectiveness of assistance delivery, and maximize the impact of federal,
9 state, and local assistance resources; and

10 WHEREAS, national guidance recommends coordination in program design, intake,
11 customer data collection, benefit interaction review, leveraging administrative resources, and
12 regular communication among policymakers and program administrators; and

13 WHEREAS, a thorough review of Louisiana's utility assistance landscape would help
14 identify opportunities to improve outreach, streamline referrals, reduce disconnections, and
15 strengthen the effectiveness of available public, private, and charitable assistance.

16 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
17 does hereby create the Utility Assistance Coordination Task Force, hereinafter referred to
18 in this Resolution as the "task force", to study and make recommendations regarding
19 coordination of utility assistance programs in this state.

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that task force shall consider and make
21 recommendations concerning all of the following matters:

22 (1) An inventory of utility assistance programs available to Louisiana households,
23 including federal, state, utility-sponsored, and nonprofit assistance programs.

24 (2) Opportunities to improve coordination of intake, referrals, eligibility verification,
25 customer communications, vendor payments, and program outreach.

26 (3) Opportunities to reduce unnecessary duplication, address gaps in assistance, and
27 improve interactions among bill assistance, arrearage management, disconnection
28 prevention, and related energy assistance programs.

29 (4) Opportunities to improve access to assistance for vulnerable households,
30 including seniors, persons with disabilities, households with young children, and households

1 facing acute energy burdens.

2 (5) Any legislation, administrative action, action by the Public Service Commission,
3 memoranda of understanding, or other policy changes necessary to improve coordination of
4 utility assistance programs in Louisiana.

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be composed of the
6 following fourteen members:

7 (1) One member of the Senate appointed by the chairman of the Senate Committee
8 on Commerce, Consumer Protection and International Affairs.

9 (2) One member appointed by the chairman of the Louisiana Public Service
10 Commission.

11 (3) One member appointed by the secretary of the Department of Conservation and
12 Energy.

13 (4) One member appointed by Entergy Corporation.

14 (5) One member appointed by Cleco Power LLC.

15 (6) One member appointed by Southwestern Electric Power Company.

16 (7) One member appointed by Atmos Energy Corporation.

17 (8) One member appointed jointly by Delta North Louisiana Gas Company, LLC and
18 Delta South Louisiana Gas Company, LLC.

19 (9) One member appointed by the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives.

20 (10) One member appointed by the Louisiana Energy Power Authority.

21 (11) One member appointed by the Louisiana Housing Corporation.

22 (12) One member appointed by the Association of Community Action Partnership.

23 (13) One member appointed by the Louisiana Council on Aging Directors
24 Association.

25 (14) One member appointed by the Louisiana Association of United Ways.

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each designating authority shall submit the name
27 of its appointee to the chairman of the Louisiana Public Service Commission, or his
28 designee, no later than August 1, 2026.

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall convene its first meeting no
30 later than September 1, 2026, at the call of the chairman of the Louisiana Public Service

1 Commission, or his designee, and, at its first meeting, the members shall elect a chairman,
2 vice chairman, and any other officers the task force deems necessary.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Public Service Commission shall
4 provide administrative support to the task force.

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a majority of the members of the task force shall
6 constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and that any official action of the task
7 force shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present.

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the task force shall serve
9 without compensation, except per diem or expenses reimbursement to which they may be
10 individually entitled as members of their constituent organizations.

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall submit a written report of
12 its findings and recommendations no later than March 1, 2027, to the Louisiana Public
13 Service Commission, the House Committee on Commerce, the Senate Committee on
14 Commerce, Consumer Protection and International Affairs, the Louisiana Housing
15 Corporation, and the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library as required by R.S.
16 24:771 and 772.

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall terminate on the date of the
18 submission of its report or March 1, 2027, whichever occurs first.

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
20 secretary of the Louisiana Public Service Commission, the secretary of the Department of
21 Conservation and Energy, the executive director of the Louisiana Housing Corporation, and
22 each entity with appointment authority under this Resolution, including Entergy Corporation,
23 Cleco Power LLC, Southwestern Electric Power Company, Atmos Energy Corporation,
24 Delta North Louisiana Gas Company, LLC, Delta South Louisiana Gas Company, LLC, the
25 Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives, the Louisiana Energy Power Authority, the
26 Association of Community Action Partnership, the Louisiana Council on Aging Directors
27 Association, and the Louisiana Association of United Ways.

